



## **Transportation Advisory Committee**

Date: December 13, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

### **Minutes.**

#### **1. Administration.**

Members in Attendance: John Alessi (DPCD), John Aslanian, Lenard Diggins, Melissa Laube, Ofer Mazor, Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Beth Benedikt, Wayne Chouinard (DPW), Kenny Fennell, Jeff Maxtutis, Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Jeff Hadden, Paul Schlichtman, Petru Sofio, and Joe Solomon.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled “Governor Charles Baker’s 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law”. The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

#### **B. Approval of November 8, 2023 Meeting Notes.**

Minutes for the Meeting of November 8, 2023, were approved subject to the following corrections:

Section 3A. Update from DPCD: Mystic River Path to the Minuteman Bikeway. John Alessi corrected that the RFP is being reviewed by MassDOT as the project will use Federal funds.

Section 5. Broadway / Rawson Rd. Scott Smith provided the following clarification: (4) obtain traffic counts at River/Bates/Warren/Broadway to see if signal timings can be adjusted to reduce the number of cycle failures (which may be diverting traffic to Rawson). Turning movement counts at River/Bates/Warren/Broadway would also be useful for examining the planned

future work on Broadway. In the long-term, consider tightening the road geometry on Foster St. and monitoring traffic volumes on Rawson Rd.

**Section 8. Park Ave / Oakland Ave Crosswalk:** Melissa Laube corrected that there were no residents at the meeting of Park Ave and Oakland Ave.

**C. Correspondence Sent/Received from October 7, 2023 to November 3, 2023.** No correspondence was sent/received during this time interval.

**2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).**

Scott Smith informed that a pedestrian was struck by a driver on November 19 at Park Ave / Wollaston Ave. Laura Swan commented that DPW shared sketches of geometry changes at the intersection at a previous meeting. MWRA is scheduled to do trench work on Park Ave in 2026 to replace the existing water main from Route 2 to Appleton St, and this might be the time to incorporate changes to the roadway. John Alessi added that there are clear safety issues on Park Ave. He will be restarting the conversation about short-term enhancements to improve safety in the area.

John Aslanian raised the issue of pedestrian crossing of Pleasant St / Rt 60 at Maple St. During rush hour, the vehicle queue at the Mass Ave traffic light can block southbound drivers' view of pedestrians trying to cross at Maple St. He suggested that the Town consider installing an RRFB to enhance safety of crossing for pedestrians. Laura Swan responded that she has some ideas on this crossing and will discuss it offline.

**3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).**

**A. Update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (John Alessi, DPCD).**

Mass Ave / Appleton St: Stantec is reviewing the public comments. The preliminary design will be shared next month.

Mystic River Path to the Minuteman Bikeway: DPCD is working with MassDOT on preparing an RFP for the project with the goal of posting it in February or March.

Stratton Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project: The Town is examining right-of-way plans. The project, including the need to acquire property, will go to the spring Town Meeting for approval.

Bike Lane Design Guide: Comments on the draft are being reviewed and discussed with DPW. The project will be completed by the end of February.

**B. Update from the Department of Public Works (Bill Copithorne, DPW).**

DPW provided an email update to TAC:

River Street Speed Feedback Signs: The contract for installation of the signs that the Town was awarded via a MassDOT grant was awarded and the installation process is underway. Installation should be completed before the end of this calendar year.

Brackett School Zone Signs: The signs around Brackett were checked by our signal contractor. Clocks were reset where applicable and new timer equipment is required to return another to operation.

Park Ave / Paul Revere Rd: Engineering is working with DPW staff and APD to install signage improvements in this intersection in response to the recent pedestrian crash.

**C. There was no update from the Police Department.**

**4. Vote: Eastern Ave.**

Laura Swan summarized the recommendations as presented in the last meeting. She had discussed the school zone with Corey Rateau of APD to ensure enforceability. In response to a request by Len Diggins, Laura Swan will update the titles to the graphs to clarify the presented data.

John Alessi commented that static sign recommendation can be done soon, however, the recommendation for a speed-feedback sign will require identifying a funding source. One possible source is MassDOT/SRTS, which is funding speed-feedback signs. The Town was awarded one earlier in 2023 to install a speed-feedback sign on River St by Thompson School.

TAC voted unanimously to send the recommendations to the Select Board.

**5. Vote: Dow Ave / Rhinecliff St**

Melissa Laube summarized the observations and recommendations. In the short term, improve the visibility of the crosswalk by (1) trimming tree branches and removing a dead tree; (2) upgrading signs to retroreflective signs and changing the Blind Driveway sign to a crosswalk sign; and (3) repainting the crosswalk and stop bar.

In the long term, consider modest curb extensions to reduce the turn radius and decrease the pedestrian crossing distance. This could be informed by conducting turning movement counts, pedestrian counts, and speed observations. Shoji Takahashi suggested a quick-build flex-post installation for curb extensions.

Len Diggins said TAC should make its case to the Select Board and Town Manager as to how it would prioritize changes. John Alessi agreed adding that the Town needs to understand priorities for near-term safety improvements.

TAC voted unanimously to send the recommendations to the Select Board.

## **6. Discussion: Park Ave / Oakland Ave crosswalk.**

Melissa Laube described the Working Group's observations in its November site visit and a follow-up site visit in December, which was attended by four residents. Park Ave is a wide street with relatively fast vehicular traffic which does not stop for pedestrians. Northbound drivers see the traffic light at Florence Ave and increase their speed so as not to get stuck at the red light. Northbound drivers making a right turn onto Oakland Ave make the turn at fairly high speed. Sun glare can be a problem. Street-light illumination of the pedestrian crossings needs to-be assessed at night time.

A resident conducted pedestrian counts of students crossing Park Ave to/from Ottoson Middle School: 28 pedestrians between 7:30am – 8:30am; and 28 pedestrians between 3:00pm – 3:30pm.

The Working Group is discussing a phased-installation of improvements: in-road pedestrian-crossing bollard; retroreflective crosswalk signs on the front and back of reflective posts; flex-post delineated curb extensions.

Petri Sofio, who attended the December site visit, developed a quick-build sketch which he presented. The sketch included flex-post delineated curb extensions, striping neckdown to narrow the street width at the intersection to reduce vehicle speeds. Yield lines near the crosswalk provide another visual for drivers as they approach the intersection.

Scott Smith suggested making a wider center line to space the in-street bollard. Ofer Mazor commented that flex posts on both sides of the bicycle lane prevents an escape route for cyclists.

Joe Solomon re-inquired as to the boundaries of the 25-mph speed zone and 35-mph speed zone as the 35-mph speed limit sign might not be located correctly. John Alessi responded that he is inquiring about the speed zones through the DPCD files.

## **7. Update: Bow St.**

A Working Group has been assessing the installation of a crosswalk near the intersection of Bow St and the Minuteman Bikeway. One possible location has been identified at the westside of Sunset Rd, but it is not clear how much it might be used. The northbound crossing sight lines are clear in both directions; however, the southbound crossing is hindered by the road curve. The Working Group is arranging a site visit with DPW for its input.

## **8. Update: Winter St and Oxford St.**

John Aslanian provided a summary and expressed that the original concerns have been addressed, including by changes by Lesley Ellis School in its arrival/dismissal procedures. Residents have raised new concerns, but these should be addressed separately. A draft memo is being prepared for TAC review to close out this project.

## **9. Roadway Safety Request Form**

John Alessi described a new in-development process on how the Town receives, evaluates, and implements traffic-related requests. This "Roadway Safety Request Form" provides a single-intake transportation-related request in paper form or online. He described the form and the process.

Laura Swan remarked that having one stream for transportation-related requests will provide for a better process. Presently, TAC receives requests from the Select Board, from direct emails to TAC Members or DPW or DPCD, among others. Laura Swan inquired whether the requestor's email and phone information are optional, and who has access to such information. She added that it is useful to have contact information for follow-up questions/clarifications. She wants to see if the draft forms can be completed by a 7<sup>th</sup>-grade student to test its accessibility.

Scott Smith pointed out the TAC Policy on criteria for consideration be included or referenced in the form. Regarding contact information, he opined that one or two contacts be assigned as main points of contact for follow-up purposes. The signature page could otherwise be the same as a voter form: name, signature, street address (contact information not required).

John Alessi said that he will consider how to incorporate the criteria in order to balance completeness with brevity. Jim Stubbe added that we will need to see the processes and decide what is public facing versus internal.

**10. Adjourn.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.